

THE
Chap-Book
SEMI-MONTHLY

Contents for October 15, 1895

THE BALLAD OF AN ARTISTS WIFE JOHN DAVIDSON
WITH DECORATIONS BY FRANK HAZENPLUG

A DAY OF SOLITUDE ROYAL FRANK HIRD

EASY SAYINGS DOROTHEA LUMMIS

THE DEPARTURE OF BLUEBEARD
JOSEPH E. SOUTHALL

UNKNOWN IDEAL DORA SIGERSON

NOTES

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A BALLAD OF AN ARTIST'S WIFE



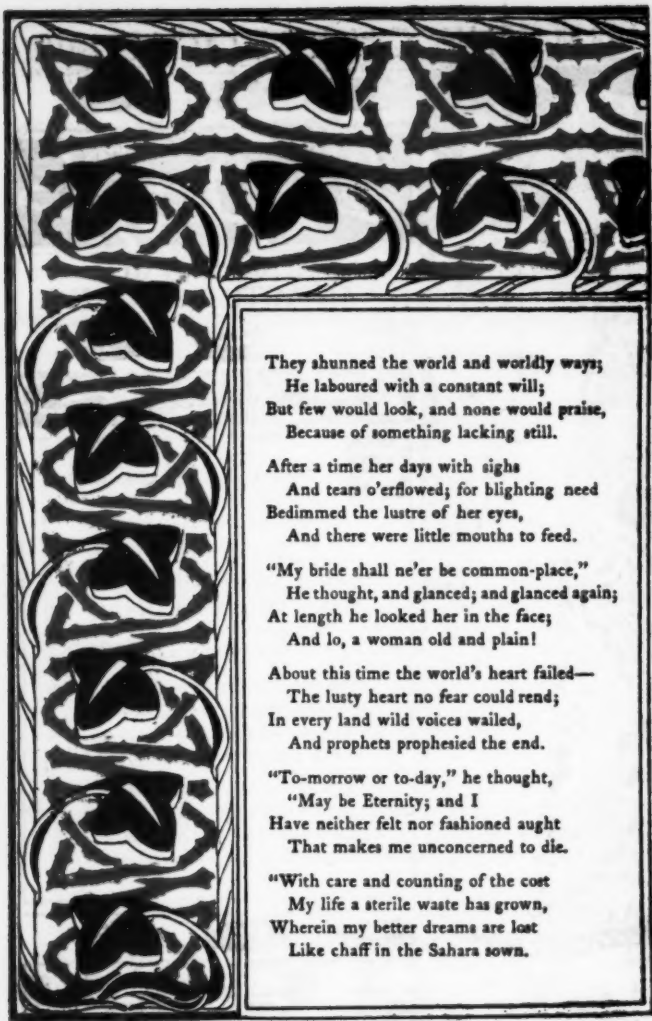
N vain the war-worn nations sought
A means of peace; and folk in vain
By vote and party tumult thought
To re-establish Saturn's reign.

Yet still the gracious stars above
Gave audience to ancient rhymes;
For men and women fell in love
As deeply as in happier times.

"Sweet wife, this heavy-hearted age
Is nought to us; we two shall look
To Art, and fill a perfect page
In Life's ill-written Doomsday Book."

He wrought in colour; blood and brain
Gave fire and might; and beauty grew
And flowered with every magic stain
His passion on the canvas threw.





They shunned the world and worldly ways;
He laboured with a constant will;
But few would look, and none would praise,
Because of something lacking still.

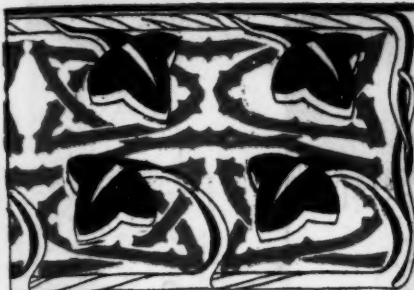
After a time her days with sighs
And tears o'erflowed; for blighting need
Bedimmed the lustre of her eyes,
And there were little mouths to feed.

"My bride shall ne'er be common-place,"
He thought, and glanced; and glanced again;
At length he looked her in the face;
And lo, a woman old and plain!

About this time the world's heart failed—
The lusty heart no fear could rend;
In every land wild voices wailed,
And prophets prophesied the end.

"To-morrow or to-day," he thought,
"May be Eternity; and I
Have neither felt nor fashioned aught
That makes me unconcerned to die.

"With care and counting of the cost
My life a sterile waste has grown,
Wherein my better dreams are lost
Like chaff in the Sahara sown.



"I must escape this living tomb!

My life shall yet be rich and free,
And on the very stroke of Doom
My soul at last begin to be.

"Wife, children, duty, household fires
For victims of the good and true!
For me my infinite desires,
Freedom and things untried and new!

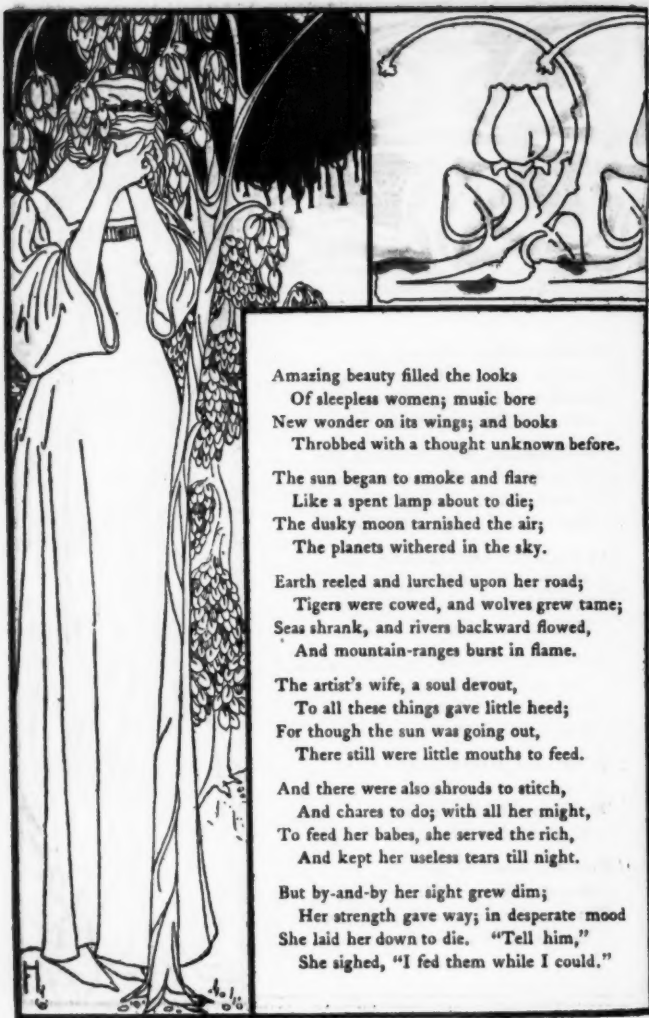
"I would encounter all the throng
Of thoughts and feelings life can show,
The sweet embrace, the stinging thong
Of every earthly joy and woe;

"And from the world's impending wreck
And out of pain and pleasure weave
Beauty undreamt of, to bedeck
The festival of Doomsday Eve."

He fled, and joined a motley throng
That held carousal day and night;
With love and wit, with dance and song,
They snatched a last intense delight.

Passion to mould an age's art,
Enough to keep a century sweet,
Was in an hour consumed; each heart
Lavished a life in every beat.





Amazing beauty filled the looks
Of sleepless women; music bore
New wonder on its wings; and books
Throbbled with a thought unknown before.

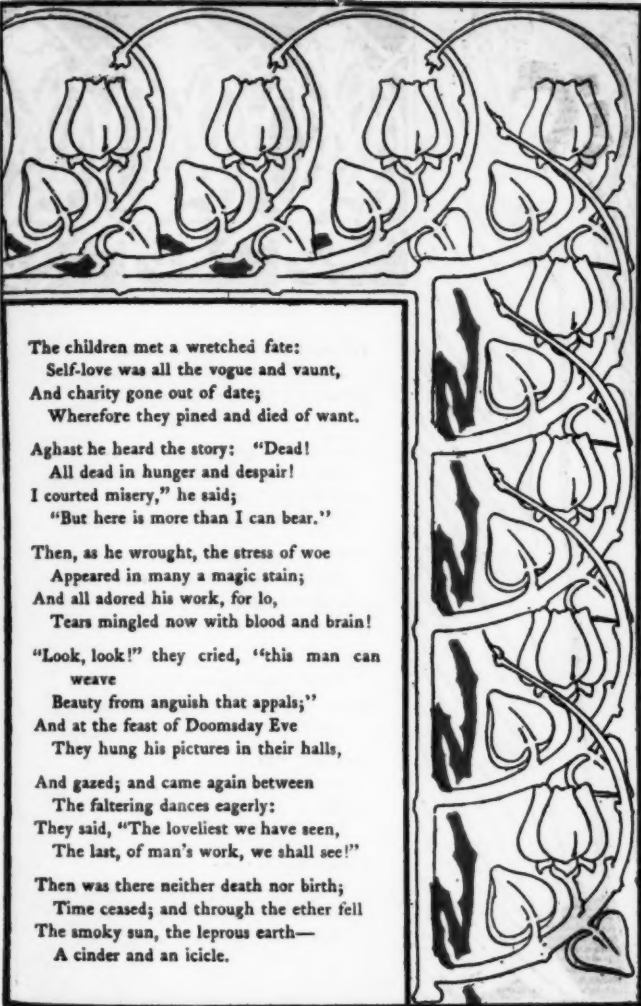
The sun began to smoke and flare
Like a spent lamp about to die;
The dusky moon tarnished the air;
The planets withered in the sky.

Earth reeled and lurched upon her road;
Tigers were cowed, and wolves grew tame;
Seas shrank, and rivers backward flowed,
And mountain-ranges burst in flame.

The artist's wife, a soul devout,
To all these things gave little heed;
For though the sun was going out,
There still were little mouths to feed.

And there were also shrouds to stitch,
And chares to do; with all her might,
To feed her babes, she served the rich,
And kept her useless tears till night.

But by-and-by her sight grew dim;
Her strength gave way; in desperate mood
She laid her down to die. "Tell him,"
She sighed, "I fed them while I could."



The children met a wretched fate:
Self-love was all the vogue and vaunt,
And charity gone out of date;
Wherefore they pined and died of want.

Aghast he heard the story: "Dead!
All dead in hunger and despair!
I courted misery," he said;
"But here is more than I can bear."

Then, as he wrought, the stress of woe
Appeared in many a magic stain;
And all adored his work, for lo,
Tears mingled now with blood and brain!

"Look, look!" they cried, "this man can
weave

Beauty from anguish that appals;"
And at the feast of Doomsday Eve
They hung his pictures in their halls,

And gazed; and came again between
The faltering dances eagerly:
They said, "The loveliest we have seen,
The last, of man's work, we shall see!"

Then was there neither death nor birth;
Time ceased; and through the ether fell
The smoky sun, the leprous earth—
A cinder and an icicle.



No wrathful vials were unsealed;
Silent, the first things passed away:
No terror reigned; no trumpet pealed
The dawn of Everlasting Day.

The bitter draught of sorrow's cup
Passed with the seasons and the years;
And Wisdom dried forever up
The deep, old fountainhead of tears.

Out of the grave and ocean's bed
The artist saw the people rise;
And all the living and the dead
Were borne aloft to Paradise.

He came where on a silver throne
A spirit sat forever young;
Before her Seraphs worshipped prone,
And Cherubs silver censers swung.

He asked, "Who may this martyr be?
What votaress of saintly rule?"
A Cherub said, "No martyr; she
Had one gift; she was beautiful."

Then came he to another bower
Where one sat on a golden seat,
Adored by many a heavenly Power
With golden censers smoking sweet.

"This was some gallant wench who led
Faint-hearted folk and set them free?"

"Oh no! a simple maid," they said,
"Who spent her life in charity."

At last he reached a mansion blest,
Where on a diamond throne, endued
With nameless beauty, one possessed
Ineffable beatitude.

The praises of this matchless soul
The sons of God proclaimed aloud;
From diamond censers odours stole;
And Hierarchs before her bowed.

"Who was she?" God himself replied:
"In misery her lot was cast,
She lived a woman's life, and died
Working My work until the last."

It was his wife. He said, "I pray
Thee, Lord, despatch me now to Hell."
But God said, "No, here you shall stay,
And in her peace forever dwell."

JOHN DAVIDSON



A DAY OF SOLITUDE ROYAL

A SMALL group of courtiers was gathered round the double doors that divided the private apartments of his Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Ardelsberg from the great corridor of the palace.

"See where his foot slipped," whispered the Grand Chamberlain, pointing with his white wand to a scratch on the parquet floor. "He ran so quickly he almost fell against the door."

The Grand Chamberlain was visibly agitated; his badge of office trembled on his tightly-buttoned coat beneath his rapid breathing, and he perspired profusely.

"Never! never!" he went on, "in all the history of the House of Ardelsberg has its reigning sovereign been alone. This sudden desire for seclusion on the part of the Grand Duke is inexplicable; more, it is irregular—most irregular."

Discreetly rapping at the door, he called, "Your Serene Highness!" There was no response. "May it please your Serene Highness!" But still no answer came.

"The Grand Duke will admit me, I am sure," said a young man, delicately taking a pinch of snuff. "Allow me, Baron!" and coming forward he tapped with the tips of his fingers upon the panels.

"*Altesse!* It is I—Stronberg. May I be permitted to enter? A new book of French verses has arrived by courier from Paris——"

"Bah!" interrupted the Grand Chamberlain.

Stronberg listened, his ear to the key-hole; then he shrugged his shoulders and moved away, when like silence followed his attempt.

"If His Serene Highness will not receive me, Baron," he said insolently, leaning against the balustrade, and flicking the snuff from his shirt frill with a lace handkerchief, "rest

assured that he will not see you. This locking of doors against his entourage is probably but his latest whim."

The Grand Chamberlain scowled viciously. Count Stronberg, the play-fellow of the Grand Duke's childhood, had recently returned from Paris, bringing with him the atmosphere of the French capital, to the delight of the Grand Duke and to the supreme disgust of the Grand Chamberlain.

"His Serene Highness's father, whom it was my honour to serve for twenty years, never indulged in whims," the Grand Chamberlain cried hotly, his anger usurping his discretion.

"No," retorted the count; "the late Grand Duke wallowed in vices."

The Baron's puffy visage crimsoned as a smile flitted over the faces of the onlookers, but his sole answer was to rattle the door-handle; then turning, he cried desperately, "Send for the First Minister!"

"Dear Baron, surely you agitate yourself unnecessarily," commented the Count maliciously.

"Agitate myself! Am I not responsible for His Serene Highness to his country? This is your doing, Count, your teaching. You have instructed the Grand Duke in the lax fashions of the French court, and he——"

"His Majesty of France is never permitted to be alone," interrupted the Count. "His attendants never allow themselves to be locked out of his apartments."

The Chamberlain's threatened ebullition of wrath was averted by the arrival of the First Minister.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "I left his Serene Highness in the Council Chamber not a quarter of an hour ago. Is he ill?"

"He may be dead, Prince," answered the Chamberlain, miserably. "I was conducting the Grand Duke to his private apartments after your audience with him, when, as we

reached the door of the Throne Room, he hurried in front of me and ran rapidly up the staircase. And when I reached the corridor I found the door locked."

The First Minister looked grave, "This is very serious," he said, "very serious; especially when it is remembered that His Serene Highness signed the necessary documents for his marriage with the Princess Wilhelmina Sophia of Marsbach only this morning. This action is full of suggestion."

Then he, too, tapped at the door.

A shout of boyish laughter was the answer.

"Did you hear anything?" the Prince asked sharply, speaking to the Baron.

"I thought I heard something."

"It was laughter, Baron. His Serene Highness is laughing at us."

The Prince tried to stoop to the vantage ground of the keyhole, but the rigidity of his uniform compelled to delegate that delicate task to the Grand Chamberlain, who lowered his bulky form carefully.

"I regret to say," he stammered, well-nigh choking over his exertions, "that His Serene Highness has stuffed the key-hole with paper."

On the other side of the double-doors a fair-haired youth was roaming about an apartment spacious and gorgeous, with the careless inconsequence of a child. From time to time, as he picked up a book only to throw it down again, or trifled with the glittering bibelots that were scattered on the tables, he stopped to listen to the knocking of the Grand Chamberlain, and the whispering that succeeded. When Count Stronberg suggested the honey of French verses the Grand Duke made a movement towards the door, but hesitating, shook his curly head, and said, "No, I have never been alone in my life before and I will remain alone." By

way of emphasising the exquisite sensation of liberty he seized a bundle of State papers, arranged with precision by his secretary, and tossed them into the air. A piece of paper fell close to his feet, and smiling at the whispered colloquy that followed the arrival of the First Minister, he picked it up and silently and expeditiously pushed it into the embossed key-hole. Then came the Prince's knock, and the Grand Duke, throwing himself into a chair, laughed more heartily than he had ever done since he was born.

It was early summer and the young sovereign's eyes grew wistful as he watched the dip of the branches swaying in the breeze with their garment of pale green leaves, and saw the flowers nodding gaily in the sunshine among the lush grass of the nearer meadows.

"If I could only get to the woods for an hour, to be free with the sky and the sun, and the trees," he said, bitterly, glancing over his shoulder at the door. "Why not? Why not?" he laughed, and threw open the French window. He was about to spring over the balcony when the sunlight caught the star of an order on his breast, and he drew back hastily into the shadow of the room. "I shall be seen at once and pursued," he muttered. "I must change my dress."

But the Grand Duke had never arrayed himself in his life, and when he re-appeared on the balcony in clothes of a simple brown, certain hanging strings and odd buttonings betrayed a struggle in his dressing-room.

"I am sure this is not right," he said dolefully scanning his legs, whereon the trousers were hanging at ludicrously uneven lengths, "but I have locked all the doors, and my freedom is gone if I ring for a valet."

A leap, a sprawl upon the gravelled walk, a rush through a shadowy lilac-walk, and the reigning prince of Ardelsberg was in the woods chasing butterflies, plucking flowers, only to throw them away, and singing joyously like a little child.

A butterfly came dancing by, and away sped the Grand Duke in hottest chase, till breathless and exhausted, he flung himself on a bed of moss at the roots of an oak. Stretched at length, his head resting on his clasped hands, he watched the shifting shadows as they chased one another across the vista, the humming of bees sounding a drowsy monotone: his eyelids closed, and sighing contentedly, he slept—the scents and sounds of summer all about him.

"Hans!" cried a voice from the branches above the sleeping Prince, "Hans!" A few leaves fluttered downwards, followed by little twigs, and a piece of branch which fell upon his legs; but he did not awaken.

"Hans, Hans, you lazybones! Where are my geese?" the voice said. "Wake up!"

Still there was silence. Then a ball of yarn fell on the Grand Duke's face; was drawn up and dropped again. At its second descent he awoke, rubbed his eyes, and yawned.

"Hans!" The voice was loud and indignant. "I can see you, where are the geese?"

Bewildered and unable to realise his environment on the instant the Grand Duke looked upwards.

A loud "Oh!" of dismay answered his glance that discovered a pretty peasant girl sitting in the fork of two branches directly over his head.

"I thought you were Hans," she said, sliding dexterously to the ground. "Your clothes are just like his. Did I frighten you! But you must be just as stupid as he is if you want so much waking. Pigs and silly men always sleep hard."

The Grand Duke had been sedulously taught to consider himself a mirror of all the excellences, and consequently had never heard that he was stupid; he regarded the girl before him with a hauteur that would have gladdened the heart of his Grand Chamberlain had he chanced to witness the scene,

The maiden was no longer abashed. She even laughed, and the Grand Duke noticed her teeth were small and white. "Men never like to be called stupid, do they? Hans always gets cross when I call him names."

"Who is Hans?" the young Prince asked frigidly, after a silence, wherein he had looked in vain for the wonted curtesy of the ladies who approached him.

"Hans," replied the girl sitting down. "Oh, he and I are going to be married some day—when he is richer and I am older."

Her youth and freshness were irresistible, and the Grand Duke, now thoroughly awake, began to enjoy the piquancy of the situation.

"And if Hans is going to marry you, what is your name?" he asked, leaning on his elbow and regarding her graciously.

"Maleen," she answered frankly. "And what is yours?"

Augustus Frederick seemed pompous before the simplicity of Hans and Maleen, and he hesitated.

"Mine is—er—er—Fritz," he stammered, for he had almost forgotten that he bore any name beside that of "Your Serene Highness."

"Fritz—hem!—that's a pretty name, I think."

After this interchange an awkward silence fell between them, the Grand Duke finding it difficult to talk to the little peasant, and she growing shy under the gracious stateliness of his manner. But Youth is the golden road to Friendship. Simultaneously their eyes met, and they both laughed, Maleen, her merry brown eyes sparkling with mischief, crying:—

"You move so stiffly that one would think you wore stays."

"And you move as if you had never worn them in your life," the Grand Duke answered gallantly.

Maleen blushed.

"It is only Court ladies and the silly townswomen who wear stays," she retorted. "You don't belong to the peasantry, do you?"

"Of course not," he answered, angrily, then hastily, "that is——"

"Well, there's nothing to be angry about. One has only to look at your hands to see that," and she looked with sweet contempt at his delicate fingers, stained and brown with the flowers he had gathered. You're a student then. I like peasants best. Hans is a peasant. Students talk so much—jabber, jabber all day long, and they can't do that unless they drink rivers of beer, and smoke mountains of tobacco. When they are not talking they cut one another into little pieces with very sharp swords, and are as proud as peacocks when they have their noses or their ears sliced off."

"You seem to know a great deal about students."

"Of course I do. Why they used to make my life a misery until Hans thrashed a half-a-dozen of them. But you are not at all like the students I know; you have n't a single cut on your face, and you are much nicer than they were. One man I knew had a cut on his forehead which had hurt his eyes, so whenever he wanted to look at me, he used to turn his head. One day he told me he loved me dearly, but I thought he was looking at my cousin Gretchen all the time! and he never spoke to me again because I told him he should sit nearer her when he wanted to make pretty speeches. I suppose you are too young to have fought any duels yet. All students must fight, they say, but it will be a pity when your face is all marked with horrid scars, because you are good looking."

It was now the Grand Duke's turn to blush. Maleen's frankness was not flattery, and at a loss for a reply he stammered:

"Why are you going to marry Hans?"

Maleen's eyes opened widely. "Because I love him. You are stupid."

"But love is never a sufficient reason for marriage," he returned sententiously, quoting the argument used by his First Minister at their interview that morning, "there must always be some reason, some matter of policy."

Maleen stared. "What a funny boy you are. I never saw anybody like you before. I can't understand a word you are saying."

The Grand Duke smiled loftily. "I mean," he explained, "that Hans will probably be able to give you a comfortable home, and that you will greatly better your position by marrying him."

"I shall tell Hans that I have met somebody much sillier than he is," Maleen answered, her eyes belying the gravity in her voice. "You talk just like a book. Poor Hans has n't got a kreutzer to bless himself with, and I only have the geese, so we must wait. But we love one another dearly and it does n't matter."

"Love one another dearly?"

"Do you mean to say that you don't know what love is?" Maleen asked incredulously.

"What is love?"

"Love? Oh, it is something here," and she put her hand to her breast, her assumed gravity becoming prettily real. "It comes to you quite suddenly. It came to me the first time I saw Hans gathering rushes in the marshes. Your heart throbs for a moment, then it almost stops beating, and then—love is with you. Every time you see the one you love, your heart beats more quickly, the birds and the flowers seem to smile at you; and when your hands meet, you feel both happy and sad—and you can't tell why. I want to cry out as I follow my geese, 'Hans loves me! Hans loves me!' and to dance and sing with joy because I love him.

The days seem endless until your lover comes, and if he stayed with you for a year it would only seem an hour. That is how I always feel," she concluded, gently, plucking tufts of grass and scattering them around her. "Hans does, too; he told me so! Have you never felt so for anybody?"

The Grand Duke sighed and lowered his head. "No," he said, sadly, falling into Maleen's manner of speech; "I have never felt so for anybody."

The feminine instinct is strong in the peasant as in the Princess.

"Come and help me to find my geese," Maleen cried gaily, when she saw the gloomy look on the young Prince's face. "They will have strayed into Marsbach by this time."

The Grand Duke started. Marsbach was the principality of his future wife, the Princess Wilhelmina Sophia.

He rose stiffly and followed his merry companion, who was shrilly calling to her vanished flock.

"It is useless for you to call," Maleen said, when a futile search had brought them to the edge of the woods where the towers and turrets of the ducal palace were gleaming in the sunshine; "they only answer my voice or Hans'."

The Grand duke shivered. "If I could only live and love with a Maleen," he said sadly to himself, and then aloud.

"Have you ever been to Marsbach, Maleen?"

"Yes, last year, with Hans. We went to see the fireworks on the Princess's birthday. The Princess herself stood quite close to us with her ladies, and I nearly cried; I was so disappointed with her. She is quite ugly," she went on, as if making a statement which she expected to be disbelieved, "and her face is the colour of suet, with funny little holes all over it. I feel so sorry for our Grand Duke."

"Why?"

"Oh! don't you know he is going to marry the Princess; He can't love her, can he?"

"Princes rarely love their wives, Maleen."

"Hans said the same thing, and my cousin Gretchen, who is in the kitchen at the Castle, says the Grand Duke must marry the richest Princess he can find, whether he loves her or not. There's never any love-making between them, she told me, only bowing and kissing of hands, and even that before a lot of people. I'm glad I'm not a Princess. Ugh! How horrible to be told one fine morning you must marry somebody you have never seen, or go to a strange country where you don't know anybody, not even your husband. The Princess will have a great fortune, but I am so sorry for the poor Grand Duke; Gretchen says he is so handsome," and her eyes filled with tears.

At this moment there was a sound of crackling underwood, and the First Minister, followed by the Grand Chamberlain, panting and breathless, and a number of courtiers, amongst whom was Count Stronberg, entered the glade.

"Ah, Your Serene Highness, we have found you at last," cried the First Minister, making a deep obeisance; "your absence has caused a great disquiet at the Palace."

"We have searched every inch of the woods," gasped the Grand Chamberlain.

Stronberg smiled wickedly when he saw Maleen. "The 'whim' had its object," he murmured as if to himself, but his words reached the young Prince's ears.

He grew pale. "I must thank you for the happiest day in all my life," he said, holding out his hand to Maleen, who was trembling under the angry glances showered upon her; "you have taught me how to love."

The Grand Chamberlain groaned audibly, but Maleen, all the woman in her aroused by the pathetic tenderness in

the Grand Duke's eyes, impulsively threw her arms round his neck, and kissing him on the mouth, cried, "You poor, poor boy."

And the Grand Duke, his eyes all dim, returned the salute reverently.

* * * * *

A year later His Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Ardelsberg was giving a banquet to celebrate the birthday of his wife, the grand Duchess, *née* the Princess Wilhelmina Sophia of Marsbach. The windows of the banqueting hall were open, and from his seat at the head of the table the Grand Duke could see the country, soft and tender, in the mellow gloaming. In one of the silences of the ducal band, the distant cackling of geese floated into the apartment, and raising his eyes the young sovereign saw a girl and boy, hand in hand, driving a flock of birds across the meadows in front of the palace. Once the girl looked at the gleaming windows, then turned her head. The Grand Duke watched them hungrily until they disappeared, and glancing down the line of gorgeously-attired men and women before him, saw his fat and ugly wife, eating voraciously. And a crash of Music in the gallery above drowned the sigh, almost a sob, that came from his lips.

FRANK HIRD.





DRAWN BY J. E. SOUTHALI.

EASY SAYINGS

LET self be but the pliant brush; life will paint the picture.

He only is my friend who can share horizons with me.

If we really understand what is meant by Unity, we shall not refuse the hand and the eye—the doer and the seer—share and share alike.

It is bitter to have believed love a gift of the gods and found it only a game of mortals.

Society permits us to play with fire—if only we do not let her see our burnt fingers.

It's a great pity to see so many people without any children to educate them.

Most of our sympathy is merely imitative.

The great Weigher may well have other measures than my pint.

It may be safely stated—even by one of the laity—that gift horses are never known to breed.

Many a man gets scared because he mistakes his oscillations for those of the Universe.

It's a poor mule that won't work both ways.

It would seem to be a very illiberal husband nowadays who would object to the entertainment his wife gets out of being loved by another fellow.

In settling one's personal equation the denominator should not be too large.

When almost everybody is clever, the dull will come to to his own.

The intellect is usually honest; it is the heart that lies.

Some people remind one of a theatre-flat—all length and breadth, and no thickness.

We all admire heroism, but we stick like bees to the sweets of kindness.

DOROTHEA LUMMIS.

UNKNOWN IDEAL

WHOSE is the voice that will not let me rest ?
I hear it speak.
Where is the shore will gratify my quest,
Show what I seek ?
Not yours, weak Muse, to mimic that far voice,
With halting tongue ;
No peace, sweet land, to bid my heart rejoice
Your groves among.

Whose is the loveliness I know is by,
Yet cannot place ?
Is it perfection of the sea or sky,
Or human face ?
Not yours, my pencil, to delineate
The splendid smile !
Blind in the sun, we struggle on with Fate
That glows the while.

Whose are the feet that pass me, echoing
On unknown ways ?
Whose are the lips that only part to sing
Through all my days ?
Not yours, fond youth, to fill mine eager eyes
That still adore
Beauty that tarries not, nor satisfies
For evermore.

DORA SIGERSON.

NOTES

¶ The other day I came upon a slim volume in a modest white cover, which gave me a pleasant half hour,—*Ad Sodales*, by Frank Taylor, and published by Blackwell, Oxford. Evidently the work of a university man, there was

neatness of finish and delicacy of touch in these fleeting rhymes, that gave them peculiar favor in the eyes of a reader overtaken by the strain of our very modern Yellow Bookishness. The following lyric, for instance:

BARBARA

"A snow-white basin crowned her knees
The bursten shucks about her lay,
Where sat my Barbara shelling peas,
And softly smiling lives away.

"Come one, come all, a horrid snap,
A silvery laugh, a mortal thrust—
Another heart is in her lap.
Another carcass in the dust."

And this extract from a large poem is, I should say, not too old fashioned to be amusing:

"To me, a man of moderate wit,
Not handicapped with spurious culture,
'New Women' savor of the pit,
The Venus blended with the vulture;
I praise the gods, I never met
In life a real 'revolted daughter';
But Phyllis is a pretty pet,
And most of what she knows, I taught her."

¶ And now I want some young and enterprising firm to start "The Moribund Library." As long as we are at an Age-end, let us end it as quickly as possible and get ready for the next revival of common-sense. Let us have a renaissance of dullness. And I should open "The Moribund Library" with a stout volume on "The Passing of the Egotist."

¶ Calculating by the simple multiplication table which *The Bookman* gives us on the authority of an English Journalist,
3 pipes, 1 hour,

- 2 hours, 1 idea,
- 1 idea, 3 paragraphs,
- 3 paragraphs 1 leader,

it is easy to deduce that a work on "The Passing of the Egotist" might be evolved from a one year's crop of a good Virginia plantation. Strange that a product so hard to destroy, should be so easily reared. For it is evident to the most uninathematical mind that the evolution of the Egotist was something after this manner:

- 1 pull, 3 paragraphs,
- 3 paragraphs, 1 puff,
- 2 puffs, 1 Egotist.

And they are manufactured by the score every day in the pages of our sapient newspapers and reviews.

¶ The Serpent, who was the father of fiction, was also the first Egotist. He was not content to be a nobody, and live a private life among the ferns and the skunk-cabbage. No obscurity for him, no indeed! He must climb a tree, and offer suggestions to the first passer by. If there had been a daily press in Eden, the Serpent would have had all the free advertising. He was a reformer, and scoffed at authority and the existing order of things. He did n't believe in aristocracy, or the rule of the strongest, or the logic of events, or anything but his own idea. He was stuck on himself; he must have influence and notoriety at all costs; and he got them. A little tarnished is that fame, perhaps; yet it stands the test of time, while many an unblemished name goes down to virtuous and dusty oblivion. But the Egotist must go, in spite of his distinguished ancestry. He does more harm in the field of art than a woodchuck in a hill of beans.

¶ I understand that the delightful juvenile verse contributed anonymously to *The Lark*, is written by Mr. James Whitcomb Riley.

¶ It is not generally known that Emily Dickinson left a far larger number of poems than those already published. Her two volumes, in fact, contain not more than a small percentage of her work. I am permitted to print here for the first time the following characteristic bit of her orphic utterances ;

"A clamor in the treetops,
A scurrying of the wind,—
The members of the viewless
With coat-tails out behind.

"Excitement in the lobbies
Of April's house discerned,
The emptying of portals,
And winter is adjourned."

It was characteristic of Emily Dickinson to treat solemn subjects in a large familiar manner. She was intimate with the spirit of nature, and had a nodding acquaintance with the diety. This was part of her inheritance from Emerson. There is something almost shocking to our Puritan traditions in the ease with which she addresses herself to sacred themes. The following epigram, though not in her most characteristic manner, illustrates this phase of her genius, quite as well as any of her published verses.

"If God upon the seventh day did rest from all his labors,
He was either tired of the job or feared to shock the neighbors.

If not, why did n't he complete the task he set his hand to,
Instead of leaving us this mess of water he put land to ?"

¶ A distinguished critic who is himself a novelist has called attention to the fact that even in an age of realism there is sure to be a demand for romance, and writers to supply this demand are sure to present themselves. We are certainly in such a period now ; yet one of the most popular, if not the most popular writer of English for the past ten years, has been



a romanticist, the late Robert Louis Stevenson. In other words all of the sheep do not follow the leader; moreover, those readers who like romance help to create romanticists; for it is a great mistake to suppose that the writer deserves full credit for the creation of his audience. In literature, as well as in the world of practical affairs the economic law finds its fulfillment.

So it is not really surprising that while the English speaking world was ringing with acclaim for Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," one

of the strongest realistic novels produced during the century, a writer of a wholly different calibre should be rapidly making his way into favour.

Since then the splendid talent of Stanley J. Weyman has won general recognition, and Weyman has taken his place among the few first-rate romanticists of his time. Even the realists must pay tribute to the fine workmanship of "A Gentleman of France," which is displayed, not merely in the swift and logical development of plot-interest, but also in a style that is wonderfully musical and clear. It is by this work that Mr. Weyman is best known to American readers, though some of his other stories, notably "Under the Red Robe," and "The House of the Wolf," dis-

play qualities that made "A Gentleman of France" so notable a contribution to literature.

Of Mr. Weyman personally comparatively little has been said in the public prints. He has hidden himself away from notice as effectually as he has escaped the influence of present-day realism. It would be easy to imagine him sequestered in a lonely part of England with the works of the elder Dumas and of the other early-century romanticists for his only companions. As a matter of fact, however, he is no such recluse; he belongs very much to the modern world. During the London season you see him occasionally at this literary gathering, or that, and you would never suspect from the keen interest that he takes in everything around him that he was devoting his life to the interpretation of a civilization remote from his own. Yet he is by no means a typical London author; on the contrary, for a large part of the year he shuns London; as in fact many of the English authors do. When I met him last winter he was merely passing through the city, on his way to less foggy regions, far from the haunts of publishers.

Like Kipling and Barrie, Mr. Weyman is a small man. Unlike Kipling and like Barrie, he is of slight frame. In complexion he is very fair with blue eyes that sparkle in conversation. He speaks with great animation, and without the exaggerated English accent that is characteristic of some of the English writers. Our talk very naturally turned upon his work and he spoke of it frankly and of his preparation for a literary career. Incidentally, he touched upon his early life in the beautiful country around Ludlow, Shropshire, in the Welsh marshes, where he was born and where he still spends a large part of every year. He was prepared for the bar at Shrewsbury, and, after taking his degree at the University, he studied law and for ten years was in actual practice as a barrister.

"Then you did n't begin writing as early as most of our authors," I suggested, when Mr. Weyman had mentioned these facts.

"I fancy that I did," he replied with a smile. "At Oxford I wrote some stories—short ones, you know, and I kept up that work for some time afterwards."

"And these were historical, like your later work?"

"Oh, no. They were merely love stories—romantic in treatment. I did n't do much with them till early in the eighties. Then I sent a story to James Payn for the '*Cornhill*.' He liked it, accepted it, and wrote me a most generous letter of praise. This was the first real encouragement I had ever received and I have always been grateful to Payn for it. He is always helping new writers, by the way. A kinder man I don't know. Several English authors who are now doing well owe their first recognition to him. Then there's another man that I owe a debt of gratitude to—Anstey, the author of '*Vice-Versa*,' you know, and other stories. One day at the club I happened to pick up a book of his, '*The Black Poodle*.' The thoroughness and care with which the story had been worked out, impressed me greatly, and after I read it I began to wonder if a man could n't succeed as a story-writer by means of those very qualities. So I went home and started to work in that way, and I think I owe much of whatever success I have had to the stimulus Anstey gave me."

"How did you happen to go in for historical writing?"

"That's a matter of influence," Mr. Weyman replied with a smile. "Do you know Professor Baird's work on the Huguenots in four volumes? Baird is one of your men, by the way. He is at the College of the City of New York. He has done what no one else that I happen to know of has succeeded in doing, brought the facts of the history of the Huguenots together and related them in a way that makes

them as interesting as a story. Well, I was so impressed by the charm of his work that it occurred to me the Huguenot period offered splendid opportunities to a novelist; so I determined to do something with it myself. And in connection with this matter," Mr. Weyman added, "I want to tell you of a curious coincidence. Though I felt greatly obliged to Professor Baird for the inspiration he gave me, I never happened to make his acquaintance or to communicate with him in any way. But only the other day I received a very complimentary letter from him saying that he had been reading my books. So I wrote and told him of the debt I owed him."

Mr. Weyman's success has been won by long and patient endeavour and at the present time, like other successful authors, he looks back on his past difficulties with some amusement. He believes that all good literary work is sure to win recognition in time, and he cherishes no bitterness against those who refused to see merit in stories of his own which have since attained popularity. "Readers are likely to make mistakes," he said, "but I think they are perfectly honest and do their best. I have had publishers who refused my work several years ago come to me with offers for it; and one house," he added with a look of amusement, "has actually secured the American rights to a book of mine which it once refused to buy outright. Of course publishers have to be very careful about taking risks. The publishers of my first serial story declined to bring the work out as a book, for example. They thought it good enough to issue serially, but weren't confident of its hold on the general public."

"Is it true," I asked, "that you once burned a work of yours, Mr. Weyman, or is that an old story that has been tacked on to you?"

"Partly true," he replied, smiling. "I had offered it to

several publishers and they all said it was bad. Finally, I came to the conclusion myself that they were quite right, and I still think so. I did burn some of the sheets, and on the backs of the others I wrote another novel."

The conversation then turned to the subject of methods of literary work. "I can't say that I follow any real method," said Mr. Weyman. "I usually write a little in the morning and a little more late in the afternoon. In this way I can complete a book in a few months. Of course, there are days when I can't do any writing, when I am not in the mood for it. But I never really get away from my work altogether. I am very fond of it and even when I take a holiday I find myself returning to it."

"You must have made a very careful study of France," I suggested, "not merely of the history of the country, but the topography as well."

"I do know parts of France well, for about ten years ago, when I was nearing thirty, I walked through a good deal of the country in the south of France, and I saw a good bit of Spain, too. From Spain I gathered experience that I have used in my stories—from the old inns, with their curious fire-places and all that, you know. It seemed to me that the Spain I saw must resemble the France of a hundred years before. But, as a matter of fact, I don't like to describe places and things from observation. I have to take an imaginary castle, for example, and let my fancy play around it. Only the other day I received a letter from an English lady in Blois, saying that she had been studying the country there and had been comparing it with my descriptions of the place. "Now to tell you the truth," Mr. Weyman said with a smile, "I've never been in Blois and I don't want to go there. I'm afraid if I did go there I should n't find things half so attractive as I've imagined them to be. The condition might not be right, you know,

and I might find that the castle was ugly, or in some other way my ideal of the place might be shattered."

These remarks show how completely Mr. Weyman has absorbed the spirit of romanticism. Indeed, he confesses frankly that the love of romance prevents him from enjoying to the full, some of the best work that is being done to-day—such work as Hardy's, for example. For Kipling and Stevenson, however, he has an intense admiration. "Stevenson helped me to write," he said. "If I have succeeded in forming a style I owe some thanks for it to him. But his stories seem to me to owe their brilliancy largely to careful and scholarly workmanship. Kipling, on the other hand, succeeds by the sheer force of his genius."

Mr. Weyman is naturally fond of the historical novel to which he has now committed himself. After "Henry Esmond," which he considers the greatest work of its kind of this century, his favourite novels are Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" and Charles Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" As for his own work, he has at present on the stocks a new novel of an historical character which will make its appearance in a few months. "The public," he remarked with a smile in parting, "is after all the final test, and as it has taken my historical fictions, why, I shall go on giving it more."

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

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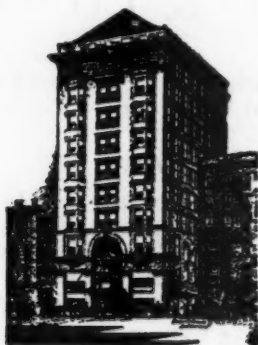


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